

Written Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

Respectfully Submitted by Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent of Schools, Hamden CT

February 21, 2017

To the Honorable Appropriations Committee Co-Chairs Senator Formica, Senator Osten, and Senator Walker ; Education Co-Chairs Representative Rosario and Senator Slossberg , and Committee Members:

I am pleased to provide this testimony to you in support of the new direction in education funding outlined in Governor Malloy's proposed budget.

As a Connecticut citizen for many years, I appreciate the need to ensure that Connecticut school districts have programs, services and staff to provide a world-class education for all of Connecticut's children. Each and every one of our children deserves an education that develops the skills and dispositions necessary for future success in higher education and in the workforce. An excellent education system statewide is essential for the economic future of Connecticut.

As an educator for many years in several Connecticut school districts and currently as Hamden Public Schools' Superintendent of Schools, I see first-hand the impact that underfunding a school district has on a town or city. For more than 10 years, Hamden has received approximately \$18 million less per year than the ECS formula should have provided to the town for education funding. In that time, the town's mil rate has risen to 45 mil. Hamden is unable to keep up with even minimal cost-of-living increases and contractual obligations in its education budgets and has only been able to provide its schools with annual budget increases ranging from 0%-1.5% in the last several years – among the lowest increases in the state.

It is clear that the state has a significant deficit to fill and that the Appropriations Committee has a huge task in determining priorities for funding. As you tackle this daunting work, I ask you to consider the

Return on Investment of ensuring a quality education for all of Connecticut's children; an education that does not vary by zip code; an education that is determined by fair funding that demonstrates our core belief as a people in a free and equitable education for all.

I urge you to allocate every dollar available to strengthening our public schools, especially to those districts most in-need and who have not received their fair share in recent years.